

TOOTHACHE ON THE SAWTOOTH

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by James L. Jacobs

In the summer of 1934 I was a member of the five-man grazing survey crew on the Sawtooth National Forest. On a Saturday afternoon, I drove into Hailey to have a toothache treated. I was referred to Dr. Heinly and found him in his office.

Dr. Heinly examined my teeth and told me the wisdom tooth in my lower jaw should be pulled. He tried three times to "freeze" the nerve, but never did get it free from pain. He forced an "elevator" under the tooth, but instead of forcing it out, it popped the top off, leaving the root in my jawbone. He dug one root out, but had trouble removing the second root. His treatment was complicated by the fact that he was drunk. He would drill in my jaw, sweat, curse, rest, and fume. Every move he made was torture to me.

After an hour and 20 minutes he brought me a cast of the jaw and pointed out that the root was imbedded in the nerves that control the side of my face. He told me he had twice severed these nerves with the result that the control of the facial muscles was permanently lost and he did not want to do that to me.

I paid him two round silver dollars and left in relief. The tooth root is still in my jaw.

Next week the Hailey Times newspaper carried a small boxed item headed, "Where is Dr. Heinly?"

We found he had lost his family and practice by his alcoholism.

After treating me he bought some groceries and told people he was going fishing--then disappeared.

Two weeks after he disappeared some fishermen found Dr. Heinly's car on an old mining road in the Sawtooth Mountains near Trail Creek Summit. His body was in it

in a bad state of decomposition in a position which showed he had committed suicide with a rifle.

Ranger Jack Cusick helped the sheriff remove the body.

I was the last patient.

Only dentist I ever got even with.